

Brush Piles



NBPP's Refrigerator Door Companion

Fall 1993

Lest we FORGET

Justine Kusner

For the past year, occasional educational outreach work for the North Branch has given me an opportunity to meet others interested in the natural world. Usually I come away with a number of impressions. But a particular one, which started out as sort of an "Hmmm...mmm..." observation on my part, escalated into a concern when I shared it with others.

My observation was **"a lot of people out there really don't know anything about prairie restoration!"** This seemed true even to those who appeared to be aware, "with-it" types who SURELY would have seen, read or heard SOMETHING about conservation/preservation/restoration efforts. I wondered, "Where have these people been?" After all the lectures, articles, interviews, publicity on TV, and special presentations at several museums, one would think this work would not come as a surprise to anyone.

But it does. On one occasion, a gentleman who lived quite close to one of our North Branch sites and had observed our work crews for years, said he never really knew what we were doing. Another time, people who came for a tour and whose work is environmentally-related, were completely unaware of prairie restoration efforts.

It is *so* easy for me to forget that more people out there are uninformed than are knowledgeable. As our individual sophistication grows with exposure to restoration work, I guess it is only natural not to look back. I tend to forget entry-level confusion and befuddlement. The shared interests and goals of our communal effort bonds us to our sites and to each other and make for tight circles. Unfortunately, that very success could carry the potential for slow self-destruction. Our evangelism wears thin after a while and can even get boring. While we need to keep our "eyes on the prize" of prairie and savanna restoration, we dare not forget those who **MUST** come after us.

I am not sure how to change or what more we could be doing. We offer plenty of opportunities for learning about the work we do. So why aren't we overloaded with volunteers, and why do so few people know what we are talking about at our outreach presentations? People do seem to love the natural world and to care about it. But perhaps they fear commitment and obligation, and fear to venture into the unknown? There seems to be a missing link between being a spectator and taking that first hesitant step toward commitment.

Maybe each one of us must develop the ability to look forward and backward, and never forget that where newcomers now stand we once stood. For each of us that came and stayed, often it was one person who made a difference, who provided an opportunity to forge our own unique bond with nature.

We cannot afford to waste time. I keep thinking that the environmental window that has been opened in the last several decades might, just might, slam shut again. I hope I'm wrong. I hope that a day will come when wetlands won't disappear, people won't poison eagles, and bulldozers won't turn under prime open land. But until that day comes, not one of us can afford to forget that the task of cultivating the next generation of restorationists needs to be an ongoing, communal effort.

HORSEBACK AND BIKE RIDER USE ON FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT OF COOK COUNTY LANDS

Ernie Lopez

General problems stemming from the presence of horses and bikes within the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPD) lands were the subject of a roundtable discussion at Morton Arboretum on July 10. Participating were representatives from the North Branch Prairie Project, the Des Plaines River Valley (Salt Creek) Volunteers, the Palos Restoration Project, Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards, Save the Prairie Society, and The Nature Conservancy.

Among the issues raised:

- erosion from too little trail maintenance;
- current abuses which result in problems such as trails becoming wider;
- lack of communication between stewards, equestrians, and cyclists;
- little enforcement of rules regarding the use of horses and bikes on the part of the FPD;
- lack of knowledge about the location of trails;

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NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT FALL WORKDAYS AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

The NORTH BRANCH PRAIRIE PROJECT is working to restore and manage the few remaining prairie remnants along the North Branch of the Chicago River in the Cook County Forest Preserves. These areas, once part of a vast grassland ecosystem, are under tremendous pressure from urban development and non-native species. We are working to restore conditions that will allow these natural wild communities to flourish as a permanent part of the metropolitan area.

In the fall we collect seeds. Always wear long pants and shirts with sleeves. Bring some water. Sun protection is important. We picnic after working so bring a lunch and something to share. The workday hotline is 312-878-3877.

FALL 1993

NOTE: Where the seed collecting site is not designated, call the North Branch number the week before to get that information.

September 4	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
September 5	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Nature Preserve
September 5	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
September 11	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
September 12	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove Sedge Meadow
September 12	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed collecting
September 18	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
September 19	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
September 19	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
September 25	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
September 26	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie (Bunker Hill)
September 26	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
October 2	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
October 3	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Woods
October 3	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
October 9	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
October 10	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove Sedge Meadow
October 10	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
October 16	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
October 17	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
October 17	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
October 23	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Collecting
October 24	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Sauganash Prairie
October 24	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
October 30	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
October 31	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Oxbow Prairie (Bunker Hill)
October 31	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Buffalo Grove Prairie Seed Collecting
November 6	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
November 7	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Bunker Hill Prairie
November 7	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Oxbow Prairie (Bunker Hill)
November 13	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Somme Prairie Grove Sedge Meadow
November 14	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Buffalo Grove Prairie
November 14	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Seed Collecting
November 20	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Seed Mixing-Emily Oaks

NORTH BRANCH WORKGROUPS

The North Branch workgroups listed below need volunteers. Contact the chairperson for more information or attend a workgroup meeting.

Ecological Management

Jane and John Balaban, 708-679-4289.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 8 at 5143 W. Morse, Skokie.

Education/Volunteer Development:

Joanne Softcheck, 312-878-3877

Publications/Publicity:

Karen Holland, 312-929-7658.

Science:

Drew Ullberg, 312-631-0332

Next meeting: Thursday, September 23 at 5539 N. Central, Chicago.

EVENTS CALENDAR:

President Richard J. Phelan
invites you to

AUTUMN LEAVES 5K CLASSIC RUN & WALK

Erickson Woods-Northfield
Sunday, September 26, 1993
10:00 a.m.

ERICKSON WOODS-Northfield

Scenic 5K Course will begin and end at the Erickson Woods Picnic Area of

November 21	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Glenbrook HS Nature Preserve
November 27	Saturday	9:00 a.m.	Harms Woods
November 28	Sunday	9:00 a.m.	Miami Woods Prairie
November 28	Sunday	1:30 p.m.	Harms Woods

Directions

BUFFALO GROVE PRAIRIE (Buffalo Grove)—Turn north on Johnson Drive, which is the first light west of Milwaukee on Lake-Cook Road. Meet in the Cryovac lot, the first driveway on the west side of Johnson Drive. The prairie is under the Commonwealth Edison power lines.

BUNKER HILL/OXBOW (Chicago)—Meet at the Bunker Hill Forest Preserve parking lot on the west side of Caldwell Ave. about 1/4 mile north of Devon Ave.

EMILY OAKS NATURE CENTER (Skokie)—From intersection of Skokie Blvd. and Howard St., go east on Howard to first residential street, Knox. Go north on Knox to Brummel. Turn left on Brummel and go one block to Nature Center parking lot.

GLENBROOK HIGH SCHOOL (Northbrook)—North of Willow Rd. on the west side of Shermer Road. Enter the parking lot at the north driveway and park by the tennis courts.

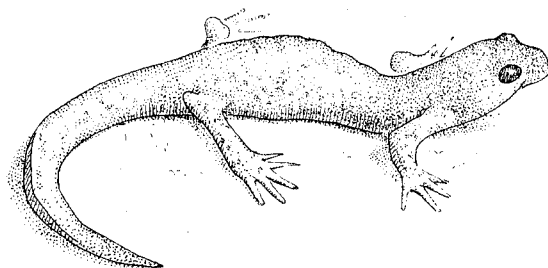
HARMS WOODS (Glenview)—Meet at Forest Preserve Grove parking lot on the west side of Harms Rd., just south of Glenview Rd.

MIAMI-INDIGO (Morton Grove-Niles)—Meet at Miami Woods Prairie Forest Preserve parking lot on the east side of Caldwell Ave., two blocks north of Oakton Ave.

SAUGANASH PRAIRIE (Chicago)—Meet at the edge of the Forest Preserve along the south side of Bryn Mawr Ave. at Kilbourn Ave. (south of Peterson Ave. and east of Cicero Ave.)

SOMME NATURE PRESERVE (Northbrook)—Meet in the Post Office parking lot, Dundee and Western Avenues.

SOMME PRAIRIE GROVE, WOODS, AND SEDGE MEADOW (Northbrook)—Take Dundee Rd. two miles west from the Edens Expressway to Waukegan Rd. Go north a few hundred feet on Waukegan and meet at the unpaved parking area on the west side of the road.



is on roadways and bike paths and is flat and fast.

Getting to Erickson Woods in Northfield—Located 30 minutes north of Chicago off I-94. From Chicago: Take I-94 North to the Willow Road East exit. Erickson Woods is located on the north side of the road at Willow Road and I-94.

REGISTRATION: 5K Run—\$13 in advance, \$15 race day
 5K Walk—\$10 in advance, \$12 race day
 Entry fee includes t-shirt, refreshments, raffle and results. Race day registration and packet pick-up begins at 8:00 a.m. and continues until race starts.

AWARDS: Prizes and certificates will be awarded to the overall male and female winners, as well as the top three male and female finishers in each age group: 19 & under, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 & over.

POST RACE ACTIVITIES: Immediately following the race the post race party will feature refreshments, awards ceremony and door prizes. You must be present to win door prizes.

RESULTS: All finishers will receive a results postcard in the mail indicating official finish time and place.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call Expertise Event Management at (312) 348-5252 or The Forest Preserve District of Cook County-Office of Special events at (708) 771-1014 or (708) 771-1062.

Forest Preserve District of Cook County
 Joseph N. Nevius, General Superintendent

NACHUSA CAMPOUT

Saturday, October 9

Join us for the North Branch Nachusa Grasslands Workday and Campout. Preregister by calling Joanne at 312-878-3877. (Limit 25 people)

Brush Pile Crew

Editing: Barbara Rose

Layout: Kathy and Chuck Lapinsky

CLASSES/LECTURES

VOLUNTEER STEWARDSHIP NETWORK

The Nature Conservancy

79 W. Monroe, Suite 900, Chicago, Illinois 60603

Requirements: These courses are open to active stewards, co-stewards, and monitors in the Volunteer Stewardship Network. Preregistration is required for all classes. To do so, follow the instructions within each course description. *Only when no other instructions are given call (312) 346-8166 to register.*

Natural Areas Quality Assessment: Field Techniques and Data Analysis.

Saturday, September 4, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM.

Location: Harms Woods.

This workshop is designed for participants in plant community transects for long-term monitoring of natural area quality. This morning exercise will explore field techniques. After lunch, we'll learn how to apply the Lotus 1-2-3 programs (for IBM compatibles) developed by instructors Linda Wetstein and Gerry Wilhelm. Class limit: 8.

Nachusa Grasslands Field Trip.

Sunday, September 5, all day, rain or shine.

The West Chicago Prairie Stewardship Group invites volunteers to join them at a Nachusa work day. The morning's project will be clearing, stacking and stub-herbicide invasive brush. After a lunch break (bring your own field lunch), the afternoon will be spent exploring selected areas of the Grasslands. This event provides an opportunity to participate in the management of the area containing Illinois' largest stand of the state-endangered Kitten-Tail (*Wulfenia bullii*), and to get a good look at some highlights of a VSN showpiece site. Carpool departs West Chicago Prairie parking lot at 7:15 AM for the 1.5 hour drive to Nachusa; expect to return by 5:00 PM. Carpoolers and solo-drivers, call Julie for directions and to register (312) 247-2606.

Mapping Natural Areas.

Saturday, September 8, 9:00 AM-Noon.

Location: Emily Oaks Nature Center, Skokie.

Mapping is one of the most important skills a steward can acquire. This workshop will introduce participants to the basics of map making, provide hands-on experience, and answer questions. It will also familiarize people with existing available resources such as aerial photos. No previous experience is necessary. Instructor: Richard Carter.

Spring Valley's 10th Birthday Celebration.

Saturday, September 18, 8:00 AM-9:00 PM.

We invite you to help celebrate Spring Valley's official opening of the nature sanctuary to the public amidst a field of swaying prairie flowers. Pre-registration required for Autumn Bird Walk 8:00-9:30 AM.

Great Lakes Bioregional Congress '93.

Wild Onion Alliance

September 16-19

Location: International Conference Center, 4750 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago.

Gain new insights to our regions, and learn ways of living that are ecologically sustainable and socially just.

Environmental Outreach Program for School Children.

This is an innovative youth stewardship program that helps children to develop a relationship with the native ecosystems of Illinois. Volunteer docents are trained to work with young people in the classroom and in the field. Stewardship activities will be the focus of the learning process. A very successful pilot program was tested last spring in the Palos Preserves of Cook County Forest Preserves. This will be expanded to other sites this fall. To participate as a volunteer docent begin by calling the Conservancy office (312) 346-8166. One training session is scheduled for September 22, at 7:30 PM. Other sessions will be added soon.

Autumn on the Prairie.

Saturday, September 18, 10:00 AM-5:00 PM.

Location: Nachusa Grasslands

This prairie celebration will feature guided tours throughout the day, displays of prairie wildlife and Native American artifacts, a wildlife arts and crafts sale, and a natural history book sale. Participate in a seed scattering event and learn about other restoration techniques. A controlled burn will be conducted, weather permitting. Lunch and refreshments will be available. Contact Gene St. Louis (815) 756-8747.

Lecture by Dr. Norman Myers.

September 30, 7:00 PM.

Location: Bradley University, Peoria.

The Nature Conservancy and Bradley University are sponsoring a lecture by Dr. Norman Myers, one of the world's most widely consulted environmentalists. Dr. Myers advises governments, development organizations and scientific bodies on an array of issues from global warming and the population explosion to the future of our economies and the overall theme of one-world living. Free. TNC central Illinois office (309) 673-6689.

Ecological Restoration Research at the Newberry Library.

Saturday, October 9, 10:00 AM-Noon

Location: Conservation Lab, 5th floor at 60. W Walton Street in Chicago

An introduction to the Newberry Library's resources relevant to many aspects of ecological restoration, such as land use patterns and cultures of indigenous peoples. This two-hour orientation will focus on the Newberry's extensive holdings of sources on local history, Native Americans, and maps.

Autumn in Oak Woods.

Sunday, October 10, Noon-5:00 PM.

Location: Camp Wokanda, Peoria

This gala festival will feature folk music, arts and crafts, storytellers and food. Volunteers will lead tours and demonstrate seed collecting, brush cutting, butterfly and plant monitoring, and other restoration techniques. Contact TNC central Illinois office (309) 673-6689.

FIELD PLANT IDENTIFICATION CLASS

at Somme Prairie Grove, Sat., October 16, 1:00 p.m.
Instructors: Laurel Ross, Susanne Masi

Designed for the serious plant identification student with some previous experience. Bring a favorite field guide, Swink & Wilhelm (if you have it), a pencil, notebook, and hand lens.

The class will include:

Identification of flowers and grasses in the field;
Learning to identify plants by flowers as well as other distinguishing characteristics;
Participants will key out at least one plant;
Worksheets and other appropriate materials will be provided.

Class size: Limit 15 Fee: \$2 per person
See directions under the Summer Workday Schedule

REGISTRATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Night Phone: _____

Mail this completed form & your NPBB check to:

Joanne Softcheck, 4537 N. Hamilton, Chicago, IL 60625



CORRECTIONS

Our apologies to **Susanne Masi**. We left her off the list of Midwest Oak Savanna Conference participants in the last issue of *Brush Piles*. Susanne not only presented a paper, she was a major contributor to the background pieces that formed the basis for the Ecosystem Recovery Plan.

Apologies also to **Bill Howenstine**, whose name was misspelled. We won't do it again, Bill.

In a previous issue of *Brush Piles* we reported that *Torilis japonica*, hedge parsley, is a member of the carrot family just like sweet clover. *Torilis* is a member of the carrot family but sweet clover is not. It's a member of the legume family. By the way, we've been removing small amounts of it from both Somme Prairie Grove and Harms Woods.

COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

READING GROUP FORMS

Share (and perhaps defend) your ideas, sharpen your thinking skills, expand your knowledge of the biosphere, and explore those wonders of nature that can be described between the covers of a book. Join the new North Branch reading group!

Every few months, literate conversationalists will decide on a reading list, discussion leaders and hosts. No dues. Meets third Tuesday of the month. You are welcome!

Karen Holland will guide the discussion of *Diversity of Life*, by E. O. Wilson, on September 14.

For more information, call Nancy Freehafer at (312) 342-6665.

ERG ALERT

Indian grass thieves at Somme!

Many of us enjoy our Sunday forays onto the prairie and look forward to seed collecting in particular. One of my favorite activities is stripping the silky seeds off of Indian grass in the crisp fall air. It's both a pleasurable and sociable experience. But last fall, large quantities of Indian grass were cut and carried off from Somme, depriving us of this pleasure.

My sense of outrage rose at the thought of someone taking for personal profit that which has been nurtured by volunteers giving freely and unselfishly of their time.

This year, we are asking you to assist our emergency response effort and prevent seed and plant theft during the vulnerable months of September and October by being an occasional site monitor. Please, if possible:

1. Walk North Branch sites during your free time. It's a beautiful time to be out and will help to create a deterring presence.
2. Be observant. If you spot someone taking seeds or plants, note personal characteristics and license numbers. Carry a camera and take pictures.
3. Call the Forest Preserve District police at (708) 771-1000 to report unauthorized removal of seeds and plants.
4. Notify Chris Urban of the Emergency Response Group (ERG) at (312) 871-2827.

THANK YOU, OFFICER GRAND

Several weeks ago the Sunday morning workday crew at Somme Prairie Grove ran into a fellow with a very large butterfly net. He said he was only going to monitor, not capture, butterflies. But he didn't have a permit. (All monitoring and all scientific studies on FPD lands require the proper permits). North Branchers called the Forest Preserve District police. Officer Grand answered the call within minutes. We appreciate your responsiveness, sir. Thank you from all of the North Branch. (The man with the net had disappeared quickly after he was sighted.)

HORSEBACK AND BIKE RIDER USE

Continued from page 1

- need for education about restoration work and current FPD policy.

The group recognized that before any recommendations can be made, more information is needed about existing Forest Preserve policies on trail use, maintenance practices, and FPD budget line items. Maps of the trail system and information on trail use policies from DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties will also be sought and presented at the next meeting.

Laurel Ross and Robert Lonsdorf attended a meeting between the FPD, the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, and RIDE, a mountain bike organization. The above issues were discussed, thus far without resolution.

Minutes will be prepared and distributed to all participants, including those who could not attend. Interested North Branchers are welcome to come to the next meeting on August 17 (time and place will be announced) in order to make concrete recommendations to FPD.

CRITERIA FOR LAND ACQUISITION

Five restoration groups, all members of the Volunteer Stewardship Network, issued "Criteria for Land Acquisition," a report to the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPD). The groups are:

North Branch Prairie Project
Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards
Palos Restoration Project
Des Plaines/Salt Creek Stewards
Calumet Prairie Restoration

The following criteria for evaluating potential acquisitions were proposed:

- Natural-area quality as measured by the Wilhelm index, as identified by the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, or as defined with other objective biological standards
- Additions to existing FPD land of high natural quality, if such additions expand the viability of natural habitat or increase the potential for restoration
- Conduciveness to management activities such as prescribed burning and/or ecological restoration
- Size—bigger is better
- Special importance to habitat-restricted animals—for example, rookeries, migration and breeding areas for amphibians, reptiles, and fish—with attention to the size necessary for minimum viable populations of significant species
- Establishment of connecting links between preserves—if such connections will demonstrably benefit significant species or communities

Highlights from the April 5, 1993 report follow:

The *Forest Preserve District Act of 1913* states the mission of the FPD: "to acquire...and hold lands...for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna, and scenic beauties within such district, and to restore, restock, protect and preserve...said lands together with their flora and fauna, as nearly as may be, in their natural state and condition..." Buffering existing preserves and purchasing unprotected natural areas accords with this mission.

The criteria are essential to protect and preserve the rare ecosystems in the county. Human beings cannot "create" them.

Preservation and restoration of the remaining remnants is necessary or they will disappear within the decade.

Reliance on FPD lands is recognized by the participants in the Midwest Oak Savanna Working Sessions and Conference held last February. The lands are central to the Oak Savanna Ecosystem Recovery Plan, now being redrafted.

Natural-areas restoration is one of the most appropriate forms of "recreation" that can take place on our lands. The 4,000 individual local volunteers who study, restore, and manage native ecosystems have attracted national attention. Their work contributes to the health of ecosystems and to the well-being of the citizens of Cook County.

Undeveloped land is rapidly disappearing. It is the responsibility of the FPD, as the public protector of rare ecosystems, to acquire as many natural areas as feasible for the health and well-being of plants, animals, and people. It is our mutual goal to *restore, restock, protect, and preserve* as much as we possibly can.

DEDICATED LADIES

Susan Modric

To explore how people spend their leisure time, I recently donated some of mine to a prairie restoration project at a neighborhood forest preserve, Bunker Hill, located on Devon and Caldwell in Chicago. I interviewed many of the regular volunteers and discovered what leisure meant to them.

The most candid responses came from two women who were extremely dedicated, Joanne and Laurel. I asked them why they had chosen to spend their leisure doing strenuous tasks like cutting down trees and clearing brush. Both women stated that they spend time this way because of what they accomplish. They feel that their efforts will not only insure the survival of native plants and animals—it would improve the quality of life for everyone.

Joanne explained that, not known to most people, oak savannas and prairie grasslands are necessary ecosystems; without them the soil will erode. By spending their leisure time restoring these ecosystems, Joanne and Laurel make it possible for them to exist for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations.

To better understand the meaning of leisure, I asked Joanne and Laurel to define the word as they see it. Laurel summed it up nicely when she told me that leisure was the time spent doing something that was personally meaningful. She stated it doesn't matter if it was as strenuous as clearing out brush or as restful as reading a book. Leisure time must impact in such a way that satisfaction with the activity enriches existence, improves the quality of life, and inspires passion for living.

